

**Next meeting:
Wednesday 12th
January — “The
Beauty of Maths”
— a talk by Roy
Everett**

Suffolk Humanist News

January 2005

Humanism on

BBC Radio Suffolk

Margaret Nelson contributes regular Humanist Thoughts for the Day on BBC Radio Suffolk—95.5, 95.9, 103.9 & 104.6 fm—at about 7.25 am.

If you're not an early bird, you can hear a recording later in the day via the Radio Suffolk website—<http://www.bbc.co.uk/suffolk/community/thought4day.shtml>. If you don't live in the area you can listen live to Radio Suffolk via <http://www.bbc.co.uk/england/radiosuffolk/>

Read some past Suffolk thoughts on the BHA website, via the 'humanism' page at www.humanism.org.uk.

David Mitchell won't be doing any more T4TDs for a while, due to family commitments.

The next Suffolk T4TD is on Tuesday 1st February.

Educational & promotional work

Although we're still at the planning stage, Suffolk Humanists' committee hopes that you'll support us as we expand our educational and promotional work over the coming year.

Funeral clients sometimes make donations to the group and our

members are very generous. We plan to use more of this money to provide Humanist publications for schools and other organisations, among other things. We've also discussed the possibility of organising an entertainment to promote

Humanism in the community, similar to the one that our member Yvonne Peacock's recently done for the Rowhedge Trust. It would consist of readings and music, and we think it might generate more interest than public meetings have done.

Suffolk Humanists

Suffolk Humanist member Louie Stewart died in November. I conducted her funeral, which was attended by group Vice-Chair Peter Davidson. Louie was a regular at our meetings until a couple of years ago, when failing health kept her at home. She provided the refreshments, refusing to accept payment for them, and brought her CD player so we'd have good music to listen to during the breaks. Louie was very keen on singing and

dancing, and enjoyed Latin; she used to help her three daughters with their Latin homework, and took it up again in later life. We'll miss her.

Since the Boxing Day tsunami, friends have been asking if my son Nathan is still going to Pettai in Tamil Nadu at the end of the month. The answer's yes. The aid camp he's going to wasn't affected by the wave and the school still needs decorating. The charity that supports the work in

Pettai has launched an appeal to help another community they support, which has been devastated. Nathan is taking some antibiotics from our vet and may stay around if he can make himself useful. You've probably already given money to one of the appeals since the tsunami, but if you'd like to support the work being done by Salt of the Earth, a small charity run on a shoestring, you'll find details overleaf. MN

Meetings

Moriarty: How are you at Mathematics?

Harry Secombe: I speak it like a native.

The Goon Show

At our meeting next Wednesday, 12th January, Roy Everett will talk about 'The Beauty of Mathematics'. We start at the usual time—7.30pm—at Castle Hill Community Centre, Highfield Road, Ipswich. Phone 01473 890117 or 658828 if you need or

can offer a lift, or want directions.

The meeting on 9th March will be our AGM, when it'll be time to vote for a new committee, including a new Chair. Please think about whether you might like to be nominated.

www.suffolkhumanists.org.uk

Humanism—for the good life based on human feelings and thought

Salt of the Earth appeal

Cletus Babu set up the non-government organization SCAD 18 years ago. It has been helping poor communities in the southern tip of India that are now devastated by the tsunami. The objective of their present appeal is not just immediate relief but ongoing involvement to restore livelihoods. 100% of donations will be forwarded to and spent in the disaster area. We have visited SCAD and can testify to its remarkable achievements and dedication.

Marion Wells and James Bruges

Salt of the Earth is the principal fundraising donor for the work of Social Change and Development (SCAD) amongst the rural poor in Tamil Nadu, south India, where the tidal wave disaster on Boxing Day caused havoc. Cletus Babu, director of SCAD, contacted us today (28th December) on how things were on the ground.

Together with his 45 strong team of professional aid workers and 100 student volunteers, Cletus Babu went to the southernmost tip, Kannyikumari, to assist in the disaster relief, working in twelve villages. These received the full force of the tsunami, followed by several after shock waves.

The total population in these 12 villages is estimated at 15 to 17,000 people, of which between two and three

thousand are known to be dead and about the same number thought to be missing. It looks as though at least 10% of the wider local population is dead and this figure could be substantially higher.

Little is left of the fishing villages -the people have lost everything and will have to start again. So, as well as the immediate relief work, plans need to be made for rehabilitation when it is safe for them to return.

SCAD has joined forces with local Churches to provide immediate relief for the survivors. They are also digging mass graves and burying the bodies as soon as possible, working in the most unimaginable circumstances. Everyone has been evacuated from the villages and has been housed in temporary inland camps where they are given food and shelter. Drinking water is a big problem in an area already subject to heavy ground water salination.

The State Government is understandably pressed to cope with the magnitude of the problem, as it has little expertise or infrastructure to deal with such an emergency. Unfortunately, it also has a poor past record in emergencies. Cletus Babu is an outstandingly gifted and charismatic person whose tremendous leadership and organisational skills are

invaluable in what must be a chaotic and very difficult situation. Today he called a press conference for radio and TV, primarily to prompt the national government into urgent action. He has also organized a team of 50 doctors and medical staff to tour the temporary camps to attend to the needs of the people.

With his previous experience of dealing with coastal flood disasters, Cletus is advocating that each family be given the basic simple building materials for a self-build single room mud-walled hut. After this further assistance will be necessary for the fishermen to be able to replace their simple wooden boats and fishing nets. On past performance it is unlikely that the Government will provide any financial help for rehabilitation.

Setting an initial target of £50,000 for immediate relief work, Salt of the Earth is receiving local reports daily and will be reassessing the needs and overall financial commitment needed in the coming days.

Around half of Salt of the Earth appeal target has already (2nd Jan 05) been spent on blankets, shelter, food, water and medicines, with payments needed by suppliers in cash. This underlines the urgency and scale of the need.

SCAD expect to undertake long term rehabilitation work in 2-3 large villages, making a

further commitment that will last at least a few years.

Donations made payable to *Salt of the Earth* can be sent c/o 11 Cooden Avenue, Westcotes, Leicester, LE3 0JS. Tel no. 0116 291 3098.

celia.barden@ntlworld.com

www.salt-of-the-earth.org.uk

Salt of the Earth is registered as charity no. 328328

Tax payers can Gift Aid their donations, increasing the value by 28 pence in each £.

Salt of the Earth is entirely run by volunteers who share the costs of administration. It is unusual in that 100% of donations are sent to and used directly on its work, in this case the urgent relief efforts.

1 January 2005

(You can donate online via www.salt-of-the-earth.org.uk)

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The Suffolk Humanist group is affiliated to the British Humanist Association, the National Secular Society, and the Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource.

Apologies for the short newsletter, due to pressure of work. There'll be another one in the next few weeks. Please send any contributions by post (preferably typed) to the address shown above, or email. MN